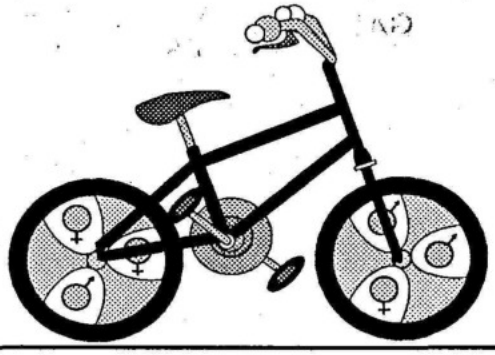


OBN NEWS

November 1990

OBN News, 519 Church Street, Toronto, Ontario M4Y 2C9 Bus: (416)-649-1356 / Fax: (416)-649-1314

The Ontario Bisexual Network (OBN) is a group formed to enable contacts among bisexual people in Ontario, and to help them undertake activities of interest. At present, these activities include: a mailing list, a newsletter, support group meetings, social activities, a political action group, education of others, information sharing, and safe sexuality information. The network's only mandate is to bring people together. — OBN Meeting, August 2, 1990.

Small But Successful AIDS Walk-a-thon

By Bill Jeffery

The first annual "*From All Walks of Life*" walk-a-thon, organized by the AIDS Committee of Toronto, took place on October 21, 1990. What perfect weather — sunny and comfortably cool! The organization of the event was well-handled. Most people wer able to complete the 10 km route in just over two hours.

ACT had hoped that 6,000 people would participate; only 2,000 did, a direct result, I'm afraid, of a publicity campaign limited in both scope and timeline. The walk raised approximately $125,000. One would hope that each year this fundraising event will grow in number of people involved and amount of money raised.

The walk began in Queen's Park with registration, opening ceremonies, and an aerobics warmup. It was gratifying to see the wide variety of groups represented, including the Toronto Gay Men's Chorus, the Christos Community Church, University of Toronto Faculty of Nursing, the Ontario Ministry of Health AIDS Hotline, and Casey House.

A wide range of ages (infants in strollers to seniors), a variety of clothing (Clown costumes to full leather regalia), gays, straights and bis, all combined to make this event truly one in which individuals "from all walks of life" came together to show their caring and concern.

(continued on page 2)

Should Lesbian and Gay Pride Day Include Bi's in the Title?

OBN members interested in having bisexualityacknowledged in the title of Lesbian and Gay Pride Day should contact Rob at 362-9892, regarding the LGPD Meeting on the evening of November 13th, 1990. If you can't get hold of Rob, check with the 519 Community Centre for exact time and room assignment, and attend the meeting.

What is Bisexuality?

Our discussion of the definition of bisexuality and the suitability of the word continued at the early October OBN Meeting. Our Boston guest confirmed that *bisexuality* is now the commonly accepted term for "us", despite any more clinical usages of the word that appear in some dictionaries.

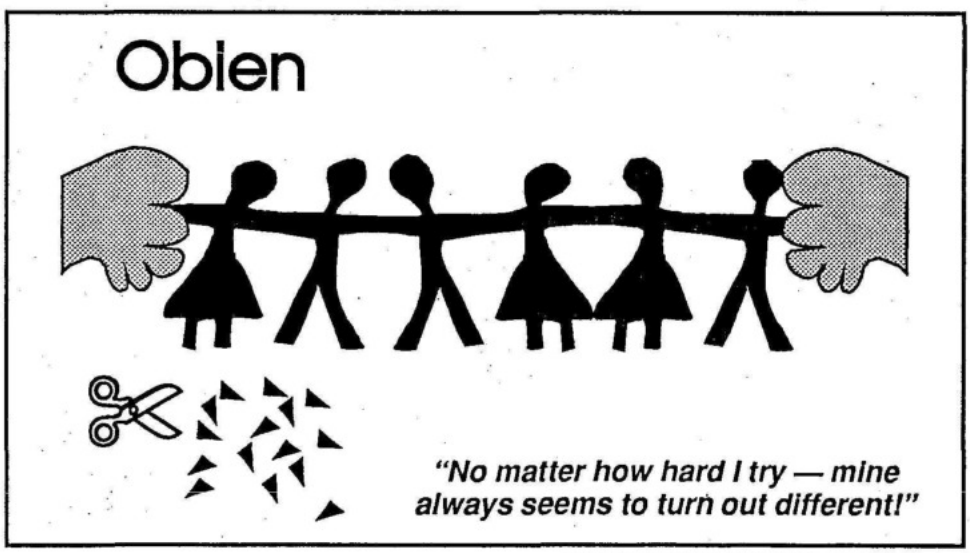
The following definition of bisexuality appeared in a 1989 pamphlet distributed by BiCep (the Bisexual Committee Engaging in Politics) under the auaspices of the East Coast Bisexual Network in Boston, Mass., USA:

"Bisexuality is the potential to feel sexually attracted to and to engage in sensual or sexual relations with people of either gender. A bisexual person may not be equally attracted to both sexes, and degress of attracion may vary over time.

"Self-perception is the key to a bisexual identity. Many people engage in sexual activity with people of both sexes, yet do not identify as bisexual. Likewise, other people engage in sexual relations only with people of one sex, or do not engage in sexual activity at all, yet consider themselves bisexual. There is no behavioural "test" to determine whether or not one is bisexual."

Theatre Report

At our October 18th meeting, members reported that the movies *Henry and June* and *Company of Strangers* were both excellent and worth going to see.



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CANADIAN GAY ARCHIVES

Meeting Times

Meetings are held on the first Thursday of every month, from 6 to 8 p.m., and on the third Thursday of every month from 8 to 10 p.m., at the 519 Community Center. (519 Church Street, just north of Wellesley.) You may have your name and address added to our mailing list at any meeting, or by writing to OBN, c/o 519 Church Street, Toronto, Ontario M4Y 2C9.

Who to Contact

The following is a list of OBN members who have volunteered their time to talk with you about questions you may have or if you just need someone for emotional support:

Bill Jeffery (416) 922-4262
Bruce Small (416) 649-1356
Carol Broderick (416) 766-7011
Catherine Crocket (416) 537-5832
Les Green (416) 968-6955
Scott Lucas (416) 633-5666

New Bi Groups to Choose From

Contact Rob at 362-9892 if you are interested in participating in any of the following kinds of bi interest groups: Massage Exchange Group; Literacy Reading Group; Exchange of Goods & Services Group; Theatre, Sitcom & Comedy Group; and Jam Group.

Dependency in Relationships

Leo Beaulieu led a lively discussion at our October 18th OBN meeting. He introduced some thought-provoking ideas about dependency in relationships, and prodded members of the group to think about new ideas.

The discussion proved that money is a tricky topic for most of us, particularly when it comes to relationships. Leo stressed that often one partner may be materially, culturally, or emotionally dependent on the other in a relationship, and imbalances may lead to hierarchical behaviour rather than true equality.

Leo challenged us to consider the possibility of developing new ways to relate to people and new ways of living in "families", without the traditional hierarchies.

Bisexuality Featured at the Kingston Men's Conference

At this year's sixth annual Kingston Men's Conference, Leo Beaulieu of OBN conducted a special workshop entitled *"A Simple Pleasure of Complexity: Bisexuality"*.

The description in the conference flyers was irresistible — in Leo's own particular style: "This workshop is about fun, bisexuality and gender. We smell fancy perfumes, caress rich textures, taste the God's potions and look at beautiful bodies. We will determine the gender of a window, and describe what we see through it."

Our feedback is that as usual, the conference was successful in providing new and deeply memorable experiences for the men who attended. ⇨

SAFER SEX TIPS

If ONE condom is good protection, TWO are even better. There is a chance that a single condom will break during sexual activity — a small chance, but it does happen occasionally.

If this happens during either vaginal or anal intercourse, what started out as a low-risk activity suddenly becomes high-risk.

If you wish to further beat the odds of either pregnancy or STDs (including AIDS), first use a non-lubricated condom over the penis, then roll a second condom over it (either the lubricated kind, or use another non-lubricated one and add your own water-based lube afterwards).

Will it dampen your pleasure? Some of us say no. And feeling safe enhances any encounter. Try it and let us know how it worked for you.

(OBN has a Safer Sex Committee. We are eager to get feedback, useful tips, questions, and new information. Write to OBN at the address on page 1 of the newsletter, or call Bruce at 649-1356.)

More and more men are starting to discover what it is like to challenge the old male stereotypes and establish close ties with other men. Fortunately, the process is so rewarding that it is virtually irreversible once started!

Bis Have Great Parties

Those of us who were unfortunate enough to miss Carol's party were informed at the early October OBN meeting that "a good time was had by all".

Catherine's gathering was also reported to be a success. About 8-10 people were there, including a special out-of-town guest.

AIDS Walk-a-thon

(continued from page 1)

The resulting walk was festive, a well-behaved "block party" in which the happy revellers waved at annoyed motorists honking their horns when their cars had been stopped by the walk, danced to the music of ghetto blasters, chatted freely and warmly with one another, and handed out "safe sex" buttons to on-lookers on the sidewalk and to people in cars.

Two check point facilities provided rest rooms, water, nutritious snacks and the chance to relax on some grassy spots before beating the pavement once again. Just after the second check point, as we wearily headed into the final stretch up Bathurst, the sounds of liverly Country and Western music marked the performance of a gay and lesbian clogging group who entertained walkers from a platform in a schoolyard. Thank you, you wonderful people! You raised our spirits and gave us a much-needed boost of energy with your enthusiastic and well-rehearsed performance!

By the time we returned to Queen's Park, we were all a great deal more tired than we had been when we started, but we all felt good about the fact that in some small way we each had done our part to help. Volunteers signed certificates to show that the participants had successfully completed the route, and then we slowly made our ways home.

You didn't participate this year? You must next! It was a gratifying show of support, raising not only much-needed money but awareness as well.